

ON PAGE

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# REPORT CRITICIZES U.S. AIDE'S OUSTER

By PHILIP SHENON

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 31 — A Senate staff report has suggested that Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter engineered the "improper" dismissal of a Defense Department aide last April because the official was close to uncovering the sale of American weapons to Iran.

The report, prepared for Republican members of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, said that former Assistant Under Secretary Michael E. Pillsbury was dismissed from the Defense Department because of the apparent misuse of a polygraph, often called a lie detector.

At the time of the dismissal, Admiral Poindexter was President Reagan's national security adviser.

The admiral and a chief aide, Lieut. Col. Oliver L. North, left the White House last November, when it was disclosed that Colonel North had overseen arms shipments to Iran and the diversion of millions of dollars in profits to Nicaraguan rebels, known as contras.

## 'Fear the Consequences'

"It would appear natural that Poindexter and North would fear the serious consequences that might ensue had Pillsbury stumbled onto the arrangements of the Iranian arms sale/contras diversion, which he was apparently very close to uncovering," the Senate report of Jan. 28 said.

"There appears to be no other explanation for Poindexter's personal involvement in arranging the polygraph and subsequent firing of a Pentagon official."

The report said Mr. Pillsbury, who now works as a foreign affairs specialist for four Republican senators, was dismissed after reports he had leaked secret information to the press. One of the senators, Orrin G. Hatch of Utah, is the ranking Republican on the Labor Committee.

Reached for comment, Mr. Pillsbury and a lawyer for Admiral Poindexter, Richard Beckler, would not discuss the report's findings. The Defense Department also had no immediate comment.

The report said investigators had been refused interviews with Admiral Poindexter and Colonel North and therefore had no "conclusive proof" of the officers' motivations.

A copy of the harshly worded document was made available by the office of Senator Hatch, a longtime opponent of the broadened use of polygraphs.

The report was written by the chief investigator for the committee's Republicans, James G. Phillips.

According to the report, Mr. Pillsbury was dismissed on the basis of an "unusual Navy polygraph examination" — the testing process was dubious. It added that "eyewitness sources" verified that the polygraph examiner "was hand-picked by Admiral Poindexter or a member of his staff."

## Examination Is Questioned

Government officials have said Mr. Pillsbury failed the polygraph examination.

It was ordered, they said, because of concern that Mr. Pillsbury had leaked information to reporters about the provision of sophisticated American missiles to rebel groups in Angola and Afghanistan.

But the Senate report questioned the quality of the polygraph examination and added:

"Apparently because of Poindexter's demand for an immediate firing, Pillsbury was never permitted to check the accuracy of the statements he allegedly made to the polygraph examiner, who has claimed that he 'confessed.'"

"He has never seen the report of his 'confessions' and has repeatedly told the Pentagon that the polygraph report must be in error because he denies any wrongdoing," the report added.

"Pillsbury has subsequently passed two extensive polygraph examinations on this matter administered by a 30-year veteran of the C.I.A. who established the polygraph system still in use at C.I.A."

Mr. Pillsbury was an aide to Fred C. Iklé, the Under Secretary for Policy at the Defense Department. In his post, Mr. Pillsbury had access to detailed information about secret paramilitary operations throughout the world.

It was his access, the report suggested, that worried Admiral Poindexter and aides on the National Security Council staff who had knowledge of the then-secret Iran arms sale.

## Friction Is Reported

The report said it appeared that Admiral Poindexter and Colonel North were fearful "that Pillsbury would stumble onto the specifics of their channeling to the contras the proceeds of covert arms sales to Iran," and that the information might be passed on to the intelligence committees in Congress.

"Interviews suggest that there was friction between Dr. Pillsbury and Admiral Poindexter's staff over covert action policy," it said.

"Since Dr. Pillsbury's designated duties included liaison with the intelligence committees on covert action, Poindexter may have feared that Dr. Pillsbury would learn of the Iran affair and be obligated to respond to questions from senators."

The report said when suspicions were raised that Mr. Pillsbury had supplied information to reporters, Admiral Poindexter ordered an investigation. "It has become clear that the N.S.C., not the Pentagon, initiated this whole affair," it said.

According to the report, there is substantial doubt that Mr. Pillsbury leaked information about the American missiles to reporters. The report said two sources had identified the leakers as "a South Africa official and a member of the House Intelligence Committee staff."

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